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## Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee Minutes, March 23, 2015

Utah State University

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**Utah State University**  
**Academic Freedom and Tenure (AFT) Committee**

Minutes for 23 March 2015

In attendance (in person or via dial-in): Bruce Duerden, Richard Jenson, Troy Beckert, Kurt Becker, Peter Adler, Farrell Edwards, Becky Thoms, Kathy Riggs, Susan Talley, Anthony Lott, John Stevens, Michael Lyons

Old Business

- Discussion with Executive Senior Vice Provost Larry Smith regarding “advisory” nature of tenure advisory committees
  - Larry reviewed the code changes from about 3 years ago specifying the evaluative role of the committee. He clarified the following:
    - The committee role should be consistent, and not a close (emotional investment) mentoring relationship.
    - Professional advising allows suggesting course correction (without emotional investment).
    - Nothing prevents a mentoring system in departments or colleges, but mentoring (which involves emotional investment and help) should be separate from the P&T committee (which involves only professional evaluation).
    - P&T committees should play no role in binder preparation, since that conflicts with their later evaluative role. Faculty can seek advice but must take responsibility for content.
    - It is not the role of the P&T committee to be successful. This requires some distance.
  - AFT committee members suggested the following:
    - There could be a reminder given on this point (by the ombudsperson) at the beginning of each P&T committee meeting (especially the first meeting).
    - The P&T FAQ booklet ([http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/promotion\\_and\\_tenure/doc/P&T\\_FAQs.pdf](http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/promotion_and_tenure/doc/P&T_FAQs.pdf)) could have brief clarifying language added.
    - The reminder (or added language) could clarify that individual units may choose to implement a separate mentoring system.
  - Larry said he would welcome AFT input in helping to communicate this to the faculty at large.

- Post-tenure review code revisions
  - 7 of 12 committee members (with 5 abstentions) voted that “collegial” should mean the use of colleagues.
  - AFT committee agreed on the following recommendations to the Faculty Senate:
    - The Faculty Senate should have an earnest discussion about this issue, to decide what the word itself means in the context of post-tenure reviews.
    - Post-tenure review timelines should be specified (including formation and meeting of the Peer Review Committee, and progress on a Professional Development Plan; faculty member should have adequate time to show performance relative to PDP standards).
    - The grievance and sanctions processes already in place should be adequate, with no additional need for an appeals process.
    - The annual review should be explicitly a “warning” or a “negative” to avoid ambiguity.
    - The Faculty Senate should get these code revisions done – either finish it or leave the current system be.
  
- Handbook updates
  - John Stevens will put together the handbook and send it around for final feedback before sending to Larry Smith for Provost’s Office input.

## New Business

- Next meeting (4/20/15) last of semester; will elect chair and vice-chair
  - John Stevens is willing to serve another year as chair if elected, but would welcome interest from others. Anyone interested in serving as chair or vice chair should let John know in advance of our next meeting.